

what type of marking substance
had etched them there, and what
sort of night had happened anyhow.

If anyone had told them
of the correct gentleman in the impeccable
suit, who had walked up and down
the length of those neatly fitted
segments of granite, folded tightly in
upon himself with the severity
of a furred umbrella, and who had tapped
out his impatience with the tips of his fingers
on the rock, as if the gray of it
had merely clouded the keyboards
of several petrified typewriters,

they would have paid no attention
at all, but if they had heard the slightest
suggestion of fingertips, left there
by the secret agent, they would have had those blocks
rooted up, hoisted, crated and trucked
off somewhere for insatiable testing

and, as like as not, would have lost a whole
police force in a manhunt for the secret agent,
whose only crime had been the temporary
dislocation of an aspect of cultural faith.

They were not told. The timely intervention
of a sparrow easily distracted them.
The infuriating spots soon vanished.

A Covering Letter

Dear Editors,

I am sending you five rocks.
They are overstatements
of weight; too solid to stare
into immediate dust; too quick
with pyrite and quartz
to be tedious, yet sufficiently
conglomerate to confuse you,
if you are normal;

too much given to erratic winking
to leave you in peace. Infusible,
insoluble, and entirely
untractable, but just vivid enough
to make a vague blur out of anything
you choose to set beside them.

If you reject them,
you will be ridding yourselves
of the five best items
for keeping other people's poems
from blowing away,
of the five items best suited
for throwing through the windows
of the Ford Foundation,

and if you keep them,
you had better not forget
to make them available
for public inspection,
because, if left unused,
they rot, and in so doing,
they are radioactive.

-- Barbara A. Holland

New York NY

olga korbut

always having been fascinated with gymnastics
and mans' ability to twist himself into tangles
I flicked on the television
in an hour of poetic godless despair
and the womens' team championships were under way
the Americans trailing the Russians

I watched with a three year old amazement
as the girls vaulted into the still air
danced on the huge square mats and tip-toed
along the balancing beam

they all had rhythm
concentration and guts
and were polished under the gun
Hemingway and Goya would have smiled

then I saw the baby Russian girl prance up
I can still see her image pausing on the top unparallel
bar, waiting for balance to leap backwards
head-over-heels into the boundless air

backwards with grace of a porpoise threading a hoop
she flew ...

I am still cheering

If you missed olga korbut that night
as she caught the bar with chalky hands
you missed one of the rare reflections of God.